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ABSTRACT

This brief report cites the grade of "poor" given to the United States educational system on the third of the six National Education Goals proposed by the President and the Governors in 1990 of demonstrating student competency in key subject areas and preparing students for responsible citizenship. Results on math competency tests as well as indicators of responsible citizenship are called "sobering" in the first report on the goals. The report then considers this goal in relation to students with disabilities, through brief discussions of student performance in key academic areas, student involvement in activities that promote good citizenship, student competence in languages and knowledge of the world community, methods of monitoring the achievement and citizenship of students with disabilities, and information still needed in this area. (JDD)

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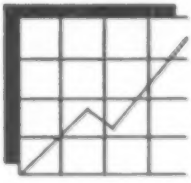
Improving Student Achievement and Citizenship

National Education Goal 3 and Students with Disabilities



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BRIEF REPORT
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National Center on Educational Outcomes

The College of Education
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

March, 1992

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National Education Goal 3

"By the year 2000, American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy."

Objectives:

- The academic performance of elementary and secondary students will increase significantly in every quartile and the distribution of minority students in each level will more closely reflect the student population as a whole.
- The percentage of students who demonstrate the ability to reason, solve problems, apply knowledge, and write and communicate effectively will increase substantially.
- All students will be involved in activities that promote and demonstrate good citizenship, community service, and personal responsibility.
- The percentage of students who are competent in more than one language will substantially increase.
- All students will be knowledgeable about the diverse cultural heritage of this nation and about the world community.

From: The National Education Goals Report 1991: Building a Nation of Learners (Executive Summary). Washington, DC: National Education Goals Panel.

Our nation has been given a grade of **POOR** on the third of the six national education goals proposed by the President and the governors in 1990. Results on math competency tests as well as indicators of citizenship are called "sobering" in the first report on the goals. No information is given on how students with disabilities are doing on this goal.

The purpose of this Brief Report is to highlight what we know about students with disabilities in relation to Goal 3 of the six national education goals:

- ✓ How well are students with disabilities **performing** in key academic areas and what **learning skills** can they demonstrate?
- ✓ Are students with disabilities **involved in activities** that promote and demonstrate good citizenship, community service, and personal responsibility?
- ✓ Are students competent in more than one **language** and knowledgeable about America's diverse cultural heritage and about the **world** community?
- ✓ How are we **monitoring** the achievement and citizenship of students with disabilities?
- ✓ What do we still **need to know**?

PERFORMANCE

Information on students with disabilities is **not available** from most national data bases because students with disabilities often are not included in these assessments. What we know about the academic and learning skills of students with disabilities comes from two special studies, the National Longitudinal Transition Study, NLTS (see Wagner et al., 1991), and the High School Transcript Study, HSTS (see Hayward, Thorne, & Ha, 1989). For example:

- ✓ 95% of high school students with disabilities take at least one academic course per year (NLTS)

- ✓ The percentage of students with disabilities taking academic courses decreases as grade level increases (NLTS)

- ✓ During 4 years in secondary school, students with disabilities earn about 4 fewer credits in academic courses than do students without disabilities (HSTS)

INVOLVEMENT IN ACTIVITIES

No information is presented in the 1991 Goals Report on the involvement of students in activities that promote and demonstrate good citizenship, community service, and personal responsibility. We do know some things about students with disabilities from the National Longitudinal Transition Study:

- ✓ 41% of youth with disabilities in secondary schools participate in school or community groups

- ✓ 12% of youth with disabilities who are no longer in secondary school live independently (alone, with spouse or roommate, in college dormitory, or in military housing)

- ✓ 41% of out-of-school youth with disabilities have savings accounts, but only 7% have checking accounts.

In general, the longitudinal study indicates that youth with disabilities are becoming increasingly involved in managing their own financial affairs and are moving away from parents' homes and into more independent living arrangements as time passes after they leave school (Newman, 1991).

SECOND LANGUAGE COMPETENCY

No information is presented in the 1991 Goals Report on the percentage of students competent in more than one language or knowledgeable about America's diverse cultural heritage and the world community. Information on enrollment of students with disabilities in foreign language courses is available from the High School Transcript Study:

- ✓ Average number of foreign language credits for students with disabilities is 0.1 (compares to 1.4 for students without disabilities)

While this information does not indicate the degree of second language competence, it suggests that students with disabilities have limited exposure to other languages in school.

MONITORING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND CITIZENSHIP

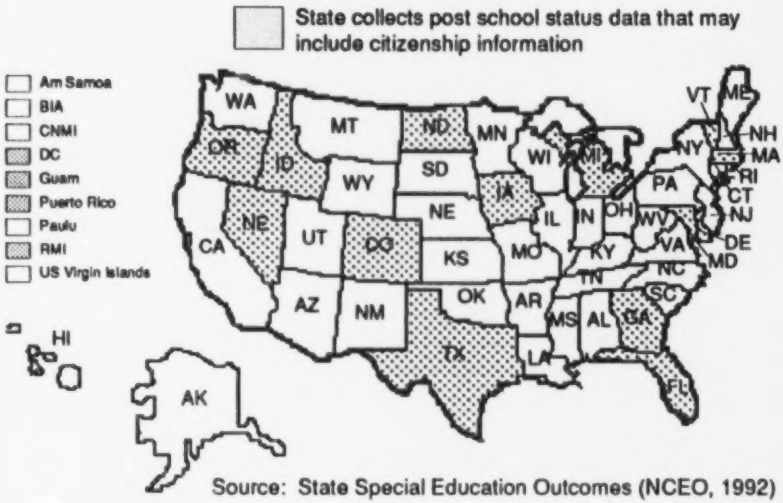
Widespread exclusion of students with disabilities from national data bases limits our ability to monitor their progress on achievement measures as well as on various indicators of citizenship. Similarly, state assessment programs generally have limited information on students with disabilities.

Although 39 states collect achievement data, only 28 report that they can (not that they do) separately summarize information on students with disabilities:

States with Accessible Data

Alabama	Massachusetts	Rhode Island	Amer Samoa
Alaska	Michigan	South Carolina	BIA
Connecticut	Missouri	Tennessee	Guam
Delaware	Nebraska	Texas	Palau
Florida	Nevada	Utah	Puerto Rico
Georgia	New Jersey	Vermont	
Idaho	New York	Virginia	
Louisiana	North Carolina	Washington	
Maine	North Dakota		
Maryland	Pennsylvania		

Information on indicators of citizenship for students with disabilities is collected most often through follow-up studies of the post-school status of former students:



Source: State Special Education Outcomes (NCEO, 1992)

For the most part, post-school follow-up studies are conducted by special education or vocational education sections of state departments of education.

Before our nation can begin to reach Goal 3 of the six national education goals, tremendous strides must be made in documenting the status of students with disabilities. This must be achieved through greater inclusion of students with disabilities in assessment programs (see Brief Report 1).

WHAT WE STILL NEED TO KNOW

The National Education Goals Panel identified in their 1991 Goals Report a need for better information on the competency of students in Grades 4, 8, and 12 in the five core subjects (English, mathematics, science, history, and geography) using existing data collection systems. But, traditional data collection systems in our nation have a history of excluding many students with disabilities. To have better information on the achievement of students with disabilities, we need **greater inclusion** of students with disabilities in data collection efforts. And, we need ways to summarize their information separate from that of other students.

In addition, we need to identify a **broader concept of competency** for students in our schools who are not exposed to the traditional curriculum but who are participants in neighborhood schools and classrooms.

Finally, we need better information on many areas related to citizenship, including not just voter registration, but **other indices** of being a contributing member of society as well.

Information Sources

Hayward, B. J., Thorne, J., & Ha., P. (1989). The educational programs of high school special education students. Washington, DC: Office of Special Education Programs. [Selected data are also presented in: U.S. Department of Education (1990). Twelfth annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Education of the Handicapped Act. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.]

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Wagner, M., Newman, L., D'Amico, R., Jay, E. D., Butler-Nalin, P., Marder, C., & Cox, R. (1991). Youth with disabilities: How are they doing? Menlo Park, CA: SRI.

Other Available NCEO Brief Reports

1. **Including Students with Disabilities in National and State Data Collection Programs**
2. **Starting School Ready to Learn**
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5. **Being First in the World in Science and Mathematics**
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7. **Promoting Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools**

The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) was established in October, 1990 to work with state departments of education, national policy-making groups, and others to facilitate and enrich the development and use of indicators of educational outcomes for students with disabilities. The Center represents a collaborative effort of the University of Minnesota, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, and St. Cloud State University. The Center is supported through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (H159C00004). Opinions or points of view do not necessarily represent those of the U.S. Department of Education or Offices within it.

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